

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SY-04 AID-05 SR-02 ORM-01

IO-10 /071 W

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O P 081250Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8843

INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SAIGON PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 473

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, CB

SUBJECT: EIGHTH DAY OF KC DRY SEASON OFFENSIVE

REF: PHNOM PENH 401

1. SUMMARY: ENEMY PRESSURE AROUND PHNOM PENH AND ALONG THE SOUTHERN MEKONG EASED CONSIDERABLY AND THE MILITARY SITUATION, IN COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS DAYS, WAS QUIET. AT THIS STAGE OF THE KC OFFENSIVE, ALTHOUGH FANK HAS DONE WELL AROUND PHNOM PENH, A SECOND PHASE OF INTENSE FIGHTING IS LIKELY. MEANWHILE, THE KC THREAT TO CONVOYS FROM SOUTH VIETNAM IS ALSO A MAJOR CONCERN. END SUMMARY.

2. IN THE 7TH DIVISION AREA NORTH OF PHNOM PENH, FANK FORCES SUCCEEDED ON JANUARY 8 IN LINKING UP WITH THE LAST REMAINING ISOLATED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS (SEE REFTEL). THE SITUATION IS STILL CRYSTALLIZING, FIGHTING REMAINS HEAVY IN SPOTS, BUT IMPROVEMENT IS EVIDENT.

3. FANK EFFORTS TO CLEAN UP ENEMY POCKETS OF RESIST-
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ANCE ALONG THE EAST BANK OF THE MEKONG OPPOSITE PHNOM

PENH ARE PROGRESSING SLOWLY. THE FANK CAMPAIGN TO RETAKE SIX BRIDGES LOST EARLY IN THE OFFENSIVE ON ROUTE 61, NORTHEAST OF THE CITY, IS STALLED.

4. SEVEN 107MM ROCKETS WERE FIRED TOWARD POCHENTONG AIRPORT LATE JANUARY 7, REPORTEDLY WOUNDING 13 BUT CAUSING NO DAMAGE TO THE AIRFIELD. POCHENTONG REMAINS OPEN FOR MILITARY AND COMMERCIAL TRAFFIC.

5. IN THE 3RD DIVISION AREA THERE WAS LITTLE FRIENDLY OR ENEMY MILITARY ACTIVITY. THE GARRISON OF TUOL LEAP, NORTH OF ROUTE 4, WHICH HAD BEEN ENCIRCLED BY THE KC JANUARY 6, WAS LIBERATED ON JANUARY 7, AND THE KC HAVE NOT BEEN ACTIVE IN THE AREA SINCE. SOUTHWEST OF PHNOM PENH, 3RD DIVISION COMMANDERS HAVE BEEN REPORTING THAT THE ENEMY IS AVOIDING CONTACT.

6. THE KC ALSO SLACKED OFF A BIT ALONG THE LOWER MEKONG, AND ROUTE 1 WHICH PARALLELS IT, FOLLOWING SEVERAL DAYS OF CONSIDERABLE ENEMY ACTIVITY.

7. THROUGHOUT THE REST OF THE COUNTRY, THERE WAS LITTLE ACTIVITY, AS HAS BEEN THE CASE, WITH SCATTERED EXCEPTIONS, SINCE THE START OF THE OFFENSIVE.

8. COMMENT: TODAY'S DECLINE IN LEVEL OF COMBAT INTENSITY IN THE PHNOM PENH AREA IS ENCOURAGING, BUT ITS SIGNIFICANCE IS NOT YET CLEAR. WHILE THE ENEMY HAS DEFINITELY TAKEN HEAVY CASUALTIES, IT MAY WELL BE THAT HE IS USING THIS PERIOD FOR BRINGING UP MUNITIONS, OR FOR REDEPLOYING UNITS, AND THAT A SECOND AND RENEWED PHASE OF MORE INTENSE FIGHTING AROUND PHNOM PENH IS LIKELY. MEANWHILE, HIS PRESENCE ALONG THE MEKONG AND THE THREAT THIS POSES TO CONVOYS FROM SOUTH VIETNAM IS ALSO A PRIMARY AREA FOR CONCERN, PENDING THE TIME WHEN FANK CAN DEVOTE GREATER ATTENTION AND FORCES TO A SOLUTION THERE.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: COMBAT OPERATIONS, COMBAT ZONES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greeneet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975PHNOM00473
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750007-0562
From: PHNOM PENH
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750169/aaaacita.tel
Line Count: 98
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 PHNOM PENH 401
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07 JUL 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <12 NOV 2003 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EIGHTH DAY OF KC DRY SEASON OFFENSIVE
TAGS: MOPS, CB
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006